

Rejection of Claims 19-43 under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 19-43 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter with Applicants regard as the invention. Claim 19 has been amended herein and, as a result of such amendment, is believed to be definite and to distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Rejection of Claims 19-46 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 19-46 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Patent No. JP4284236 to Kono et al. (hereinafter “Kono”) or by Patent No. JP406289262A to Shiono et al. (hereinafter “Shiono”). As indicated by the foregoing amendment, claims 44-46 have been cancelled. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 19-43 as being anticipated by Kono or Shiono for the following reasons.

Claim 19 has been amended herein and is directed to an article at least partially coated comprising at least a first surface being at least partially coated with a superabsorbent polymer coating, the superabsorbent polymer coating including a dried and cured water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor in aqueous solution, the superabsorbent polymer precursor in aqueous solution being dried and cured when exposed to a temperature within a range of temperatures that permits the superabsorbent polymer coating formed therefrom to absorb water when it is wetted and to desorb water when it is dried, and a viscosity modifying agent.

In contrast, neither Kono or Shiono disclose the article of claim 19 having at least one surface at least partially coated with the superabsorbent polymer coating that includes a dried and cured water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor in aqueous solution, which exhibits water absorption and desorption properties when exposed during drying and curing to a temperature within a range of temperatures that permits the coating formed therefrom to have such properties. In addition, neither Kono nor Shiono disclose a viscosity-modifying agent.

Thus, Kono or Shiono does not anticipate claim 19. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) is respectfully requested.

In addition, claims 20-43 are dependent on claim 19 and are patentable for at least the reasons given above.

Rejection of Claims 19-46 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 19-46 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by PCT Publication No. WO96/23024 to Kroesbergen (hereinafter “Kroesbergen”) or by U.S. 5,071,681 to Manning et al. (hereinafter “Manning”). Claims 44-46 have been cancelled. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 19-43 as being anticipated by Kroesbergen or Manning for the following reasons.

As note above, claim 19 has been amended herein. For similar reasons as those provided above, neither Kroesbergen nor Manning disclose the article of claim 19 having at least one surface at least partially coated with the superabsorbent polymer coating formed from a dried and cured water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor in aqueous solution

that is exposed to a temperature within a range of temperatures that permits the coating formed therefrom to have water absorption and desorption properties.

Thus, claim 19 is not anticipated by Kroesbergen or Manning. The refusal of claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn, and such action is respectfully requested.

Claims 20-43 are dependent on claim 19 and are patentable for at least the reasons given above.

Rejection of Claims 19-45 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 19-45 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 4,913,517 to Arroyo et al. (hereinafter “Arroyo”) or by U.S. 5,264,251 to Guersen et al. (hereinafter “Guersen”). Claims 44-46 have been cancelled. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 19-43 as being anticipated by Arroyo or Guersen for the following reasons.

Neither Arroyo nor Guersen disclose the partially coated article to which amended claim 19 is directed. In particular, neither Arroyo nor Guersen disclose an article partially coated with a superabsorbent polymer coating having water absorption and desorption properties, including a dried and cured water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor solution that when exposed to a range of temperatures forms the coating having such properties.

Arroyo or Guersen, therefore do not anticipate claim 19. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claims 20-43 are dependent on claim 19 and are patentable for at least the reasons given above.

Rejection of Claims 19-46 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 19-46 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. 4,810,576 to Gaa et al. (hereinafter “Gaa”) or by U.S. 5,236,982 to Cossement et al. (hereinafter “Cossement”). Claims 44-46 have been cancelled from the present application. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 19-43 as being unpatentable over Arroyo or Guersen for the following reasons.

As the Examiner notes, neither Gaa nor Cossement disclose the superabsorbent properties of the claimed coating. However, the Examiner concludes that it is reasonable that the coating of Gaa or Cossement would possess the presently claimed properties because the compositions are essentially the same. Applicants respectfully disagree with this conclusion.

In particular, amended claim 19 is directed to an article partially coated with a superabsorbent polymer coating that exhibits water absorption and desorption properties and includes a dried and cured water-soluble superabsorbent polymer precursor in aqueous solution that provides such properties when exposed to a temperature in a range of temperatures that permit the claimed coating formed therefrom to absorb and desorb water. Neither Gaa or Cossement teach or suggest that certain ranges of temperatures for drying and curing a superabsorbent polymer precursor in aqueous solution to form a polymer coating having water absorption and desorption properties. In particular, neither Gaa nor Cossement teach drying and curing polymer coatings for these reasons. Further, Gaa is directed to an aqueous polymer coating that is applied to glass fibers to enhance choppability of such glass fibers when *wet*. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that such inventive subject matter is not found in the generic disclosure of the cited prior art.

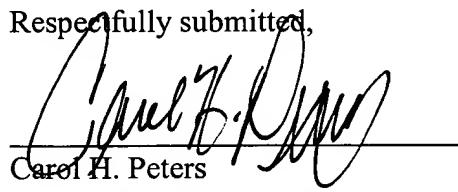
Thus, claim 19 is not obvious and patentable over Gaa or Cossement. The rejection of claims 19-43 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), therefore, should be withdrawn.

Patentability of New Claims 47-69

New claims 47-49 are dependent on claim 19 and are patentable for at least the reasons provided above. New independent claim 50, and claims 51-69 that depend from claim 50, is patentable in view of the claims of U.S. Patent 6,380,298, which has been assigned to the applicant of the present application. Claim 1 of the '298 patent is directed to a coating composition for coating a reinforced article that includes a water-soluble superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer precursor in aqueous solution, which cures, when the coating is applied to a surface, to form a superabsorbent polyacrylate polymer that absorbs water when it is wetted and desorbs water when it is dried. The coating composition further includes a viscosity-modifying agent, a lubricant and a film forming binder. Claim 50 is similar to claim 1 of the '298 patent; however, claim 50 is directed to an article at least partially coated with a superabsorbent polyacrylate coating, wherein the coating is formed from dried and cured water-soluble polyacrylate polymer precursor in aqueous solution (rather than to a coating composition thereof). For these reasons, applicants believe that claim 50 is directed to patentable subject matter.

Based upon the foregoing amendments and discuss, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an action to this effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions concerning this response, he is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number provided.

Respectfully submitted,


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